

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed October 24, 2006 has been carefully reviewed and the foregoing amendments have been made in consequence thereof.

Claims 1, 4-9, 11-14, 17-26, and 29-45 are now pending in this application. Claims 1, 3-9, 11-14, 16-26, and 28-45 stand rejected. Claims 1, 14, 19, and 25 have been amended. Claims 3, 16, and 28 have been canceled. No new matter has been added.

Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for courtesies extended to Applicants' representative Kevin McDermott during a telephone interview conducted on December 20, 2006. During the interview, the alleged motivation for combining the references was discussed. Further, proposed amendments to the claims, specifically, amending independent Claim 1 to include the limitations of dependent Claim 3, were discussed. No agreement was reached regarding patentability of the pending claims.

The rejection of Claims 1, 3-9, 11-14, 16-26, and 28-45 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 6,035,283 to Rofrano (hereinafter referred to as "Rofrano") in view of U.S. Patent 6,012,051 to Sammon, Jr. et al. (hereinafter referred to as "Sammon"), and further in view of U.S. Patent 5,754,850 to Janssen (hereinafter referred to as "Janssen"), and U.S. Patent Application Publication 2005/0171947 to Gautestad (hereinafter referred to as "Gautestad") is respectfully traversed.

Rofrano describes a method and system for employing an electronic catalog to assist and guide customers to products they will most likely be interested in purchasing. Table 1 is shown in column 4. The system is started by a customer initiating a potential electronic catalog purchase (200) by asking for assistance (201). The system then presents a question and corresponding answers. After the customer selects an answer (203), the system may then ask a further question (204) to be answered by the customer. When the customer has answered all questions, remaining products that meet all criteria are presented in a list or by a side-by-side comparison. In other words, the system presents a list of associated products based on the answers selected by the customer.

Sammon describes a method and system for assisting users in making complicated choices among a set of products in a product domain. The system presents a sequence of

input prompts to gather user preference and requirement data for the products in the product domain. A decision engine of the system then filters the product domain to present a list of products based on user answers to the input prompts.

As shown in Figure 4, the system includes a user interface/display screen having a Region (A), a Field (C), and a Region (E). The Region (A) includes a title indicating a topic of a prompt screen, e.g., Performance screen, in which a user will make choices and specify requirements. The Field (C) includes user input widgets in which the user inputs, e.g., by moving a slider bar, a choice or a requirement specification in response to a corresponding response "Category". The Region (E) includes a navigation window having a set of user selectable input tabs (200, 201, 202, 203, 204, and 205). Each tab (200, 201, 202, 203, 204, and 205) indicates a different type of available prompt screen. For example, the tab (204) corresponds to a Performance screen. Therefore, the Performance screen shown outside of and on the right-hand side of Region (E) is presented if the tab (204) is selected by the user.

The display screen also includes a specified exact field having a check box in Region (D). If the check box is selected by the user to provide more detailed requirements, a different display screen is presented to interface with the user. As shown in Figure 14, for example, the set of user selectable input tabs (200, 201, 202, 203, and 205) remain the same. However, the previous input tab (204) has been replaced with a new "Performance – Set Specific" tab. Also, the Region (A) has been changed to include a new title indicating a topic of a new prompt screen corresponding to the new selected tab. Further, the Field (C) has been changed to include new response categories and new corresponding user input response options associated with the new tab selected.

Janssen describes a method and system for assisting users for searching a real estate database for items satisfying specific home features selected by the user. The user of the system selects search features from displayed selection screens such as, for example, a selection display screen (300) shown in Figure 3. The screen (300) includes a question that is asked to the user, e.g., "What's the Maximum Price?". The screen (300) also includes selection icons (310) that the user selects to provide an answer in response to the question. Further, the screen (300) includes a portion (320) that lists all previous searched features selected by the user in selection display screens that were previously displayed to the user.

For example, the selection icon (310) corresponding to "\$350,000" is selected by the user from the screen (300) shown in Figure 3. In response to the user's selection, a new display screen (300) shown in Figure 4 is displayed to the user. The new display screen (300) of Figure 4 includes a new portion (320) having an additional entry of \$350,000. After the completion of each search cycle, the search system (100) displays a result display screen containing information on items from the search result. Figures 7a and 7b include a series of columns. The first column illustrates search features which may be chosen by a user during a search including various rental home features. In the second column, sources of data for the various features for a given item are provided. In the third column, conditions for 100% satisfaction of a given feature are described. In the fourth and fifth columns, conditions for partial compliance to a given feature are illustrated.

Gautestad describes a method, system and computer program product for production, revision and hierarchical organization of electronic documents that includes a graphical user interface (280) for displaying a table (286) from all item descriptions belonging to a particular category, for the purpose of displaying an organized overview of existing data. Each line in the table contains data retrieved from one particular item description's set of fields. The user may toggle between data from other categories (e.g., by clicking a radio button (282) related to a specific category caption).

Claim 1 recites a computer-implemented method for product selection assistance comprising "receiving a product category selection; processing the received product category selection using the computer by matching the product category selection against a product database to determine a plurality of matched products; displaying a product matrix comprising a product entry for each of the matched products, each product entry defining a row of the product matrix and comprising a model identifier and at least one product configuration parameter associated with the matched products, such that the product matrix includes a product parameter column for each of the at least one product configuration parameters; presenting a product configuration question relating to the at least one product configuration parameter displayed in the product matrix, wherein said presenting the product configuration question comprises presenting the product configuration question associated with a selected product configuration parameter chosen from the at least one product configuration parameter; receiving a product configuration answer; processing the product configuration answer using the computer by responsively updating the product matrix based

on the product configuration answer to eliminate at least one product entry in the product matrix, wherein said processing the product configuration answer by responsively updating comprises removing the selected product configuration parameter from the product matrix and displacing the selected product configuration parameter and the product configuration answer to a visible location outside the product matrix; modifying the product matrix by inserting another product parameter that defines a corresponding product parameter column to replace the selected product configuration parameter and corresponding column without changing a total number or parameter columns; and displaying the updated product matrix, the previous product configuration question, and a new product configuration question in a same display page.”

None of Rofrano, Sammon, Janssen, and Gautestad, considered alone or in combination, describes or suggests a computer-implemented method for product selection assistance as recited in Claim 1. Specifically, none of Rofrano, Sammon, Janssen, and Gautestad, considered alone or in combination, describes or suggests a method including displaying a product matrix including a product entry for each of the matched products, wherein each product entry defines a row of the product matrix and includes a model identifier and at least one product configuration parameter associated with the matched products, such that the product matrix includes a product parameter column for the at least one product configuration parameter, and modifying the product matrix by inserting another product parameter that defines a corresponding product parameter column to replace the selected product configuration parameter and corresponding column without changing a total number of parameter columns. Rather, in contrast to the present invention, Rofrano describes a Table 1 containing product features and a question and answer combination in a different screen than a product list display. Sammon describes displaying a previous response category/question and displaying a new response category/question in different display screens. Janssen describes displaying a previous question and a product result list as separate screens that are different screens than a screen displaying a new question, a new response option, and previous user answers. Gautestad describes displaying a table (286) including data from all item descriptions belonging to a particular category for the purpose of displaying an organized overview of existing data.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Claim 1 is submitted to be patentable over Rofrano in view of Sammon, and further in view of Janssen and Gautestad.

Claims 4-9, 11-13, and 30-33 depend, directly or indirectly, from independent Claim 1. When the recitations of Claims 4-9, 11-13, and 30-33 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 1, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 4-9, 11-13, and 30-33 likewise are patentable over Rofrano in view of Sammon, and further in view of Janssen and Gautestad.

Claim 14 recites a product selection assistance tool comprising “a communication interface; a processing circuit coupled to the communication interface; and a memory coupled to the processing circuit, the memory storing, for execution by the processing circuit, instructions for: receiving a product category selection over the communication interface; matching the product category selection against a product database to determine a plurality of matched products; displaying a product matrix comprising a product entry for each of the matched products, each product entry defining a row of the product matrix and comprising a model identifier and at least one product configuration parameter associated with the matched products, such that the product matrix includes a product parameter column for each of the at least one product configuration parameters; presenting a product configuration question related to the at least one product configuration parameter displayed in the product matrix; receiving a product configuration answer; responsively updating the product matrix based on the product configuration answer to eliminate at least one product entry in the product matrix, the product configuration question based on a selected product configuration parameter chosen from the at least one product configuration parameter, wherein the instructions for responsively updating include instructions to remove the selected product configuration parameter from the product matrix and instructions for displacing the selected product configuration parameter and the product configuration answer to a visible location outside the product matrix; modifying the product matrix by inserting another product parameter that defines a corresponding product parameter column to replace the selected product configuration parameter and corresponding column without changing a total number of parameter columns; and displaying the updated product matrix, the previous product configuration question, and a new product configuration question in a same display page.”

None of Rofrano, Sammon, Janssen, and Gautestad, considered alone or in combination, describes or suggests a product selection assistance tool as recited in Claim 14. Specifically, none of Rofrano, Sammon, Janssen, and Gautestad, considered alone or in combination, describes or suggests a product selection assistance tool including a memory

storing instructions for displaying a product matrix including a product entry for each of the matched products, wherein each product entry defines a row of the product matrix and includes a model identifier and at least one product configuration parameter associated with the matched products, such that the product matrix includes a product parameter column for each of the at least one product configuration parameters, and modifying the product matrix by inserting another product parameter that defines a corresponding product parameter column to replace the selected product configuration parameter and corresponding column without changing a total number of parameter columns. Rather, in contrast to the present invention, Rofrano describes a Table 1 containing product features and a question and answer combination in a different screen than a product list display. Sammon describes displaying a previous response category/question and displaying a new response category/question in different display screens. Janssen describes displaying a previous question and a product result list as separate screens that are different screens than a screen displaying a new question, a new response options, and previous user answers. Gautestad describes displaying a table (286) including data from all item descriptions belonging to a particular category for the purpose of displaying an organized overview of existing data.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Claim 14 is submitted to be patentable over Rofrano in view of Sammon, and further in view of Janssen and Gautestad.

Claims 17, 18, and 34-37 depend directly from independent Claim 14. When the recitations of Claims 17, 18, and 34-37 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 14, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 17, 18, and 34-37 likewise are patentable over Rofrano in view of Sammon, and further in view of Janssen and Gautestad.

Claim 19 recites a computer comprising "a processing circuit; and a memory coupled to said processing circuit, wherein said memory stores, for execution by said processing circuit, instructions for: displaying, on at least one of said computer and another computer connected to the computer over a network, a matrix panel comprising a product matrix displaying a plurality of products using individual product entries defining a row of the product matrix and comprising a model identifier and at least one product configuration parameter associated with the products, such that the product matrix includes a product parameter column for each of the at least one product configuration parameters; displaying, on at least one of said computer and the other computer, a product configuration panel displaying a product configuration question and accepting a product configuration answer,

the product matrix responsively updating based on the product configuration answer to eliminate at least one product entry in the product matrix, wherein the product configuration question relates to the at least one product configuration parameter displayed in the product matrix, the product configuration question based on a selected product configuration parameter chosen from the at least one product configuration parameter, and wherein the product matrix is responsively updated by removing the selected product configuration parameter from the product matrix and by displacing the selected product configuration parameter and the product configuration answer to a visible location outside the product matrix; modifying the product matrix by inserting another product parameter that defines a corresponding product parameter column to replace the selected product configuration parameter and corresponding column without changing a total number of parameter columns; and displaying, on at least one of said computer and the other computer, the updated product matrix, the previous product configuration question, and a new product configuration question in a same display page.”

None of Rofrano, Sammon, Janssen, and Gautestad, considered alone or in combination, describes or suggests a computer as recited in Claim 19. Specifically, none of Rofrano, Sammon, Janssen, and Gautestad, considered alone or in combination, describes or suggests a computer including a memory storing instructions for displaying, on at least one of the computer and another computer connected to the computer over a network, a matrix panel including a product matrix displaying a plurality of products using individual product entries defining a row of the product matrix and including a model identifier and at least one product configuration parameter associated with the products, such that the product matrix includes a product parameter column for each of the at least one product configuration parameters, and modifying the product matrix by inserting another product parameter that defines a corresponding product parameter column to replace the selected product configuration parameter and corresponding column without changing a total number of parameter columns. Rather, in contrast to the present invention, Rofrano describes a Table 1 containing product features and a question and answer combination in a different screen than a product list display. Sammon describes displaying a previous response category/question and displaying a new response category/question in different display screens. Janssen describes displaying a previous question and a product result list as separate screens that are different screens than a screen displaying a new question, a new response option, and previous user answers. Gautestad describes displaying a table (286) including data from all item descriptions

belonging to a particular category for the purpose of displaying an organized overview of existing data.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Claim 19 is submitted to be patentable over Rofrano in view of Sammon, and further in view of Janssen and Gautestad.

Claims 20-24 and 38-41 depend directly from independent Claim 19. When the recitations of Claims 20-24 and 38-41 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 19, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 20-24 and 38-41 likewise are patentable over Rofrano in view of Sammon, and further in view of Janssen and Gautestad.

Claim 25 recites a computer program product comprising "a storage medium readable by a processing circuit and storing for execution by the processing circuit; instructions for receiving a product category selection; instructions for matching the product category selection against a product database to determine a plurality of matched products; instructions for displaying a product matrix comprising a product entry for each of the matched products, each product entry defining a row of the product matrix and comprising a model identifier and at least one product configuration parameter associated with the matched products, such that the product matrix includes a product parameter column for each of the at least one product configuration parameters; instructions for presenting a product configuration question related to the at least one product configuration parameter displayed in the product matrix, wherein said instructions for presenting include instructions configured to present the product configuration question associated with a selected product configuration parameter chosen from the at least one product configuration parameter; instructions for receiving a product configuration answer; instructions for responsively updating the product matrix based on the product configuration answer to eliminate at least one product entry in the product matrix, wherein the instructions for responsively updating include instructions configured to remove the selected product configuration parameter from the product matrix and instructions configured to displace the selected product configuration parameter and the product configuration answer to a visible location outside the product matrix; instructions for modifying the product matrix by inserting another product parameter that defines a corresponding product parameter column to replace the selected product configuration parameter and corresponding column without changing a total number of parameter columns; and instructions for displaying the updated product matrix, the previous product configuration question, and a new product configuration question in a same display page."

None of Rofrano, Sammon, Janssen, and Gautestad, considered alone or in combination, describes or suggests a computer program product as recited in Claim 25. Specifically, none of Rofrano, Sammon, Janssen, and Gautestad, considered alone or in combination, describes or suggests a computer program product including instructions for displaying a product matrix including a product entry for each of the matched products, each product entry defining a row of the product matrix and including a model identifier and at least one product configuration parameter associated with the matched products, such that the product matrix includes a product parameter column for each of the at least one product configuration parameters, and instructions for modifying the product matrix by inserting another product parameter that defines a corresponding product parameter column to replace said selected product configuration parameter and corresponding column without changing a total number of parameter columns. Rather, in contrast to the present invention, Rofrano describes a Table 1 containing product features and a question and answer combination in a different screen than a product list display. Sammon describes displaying a previous response category/question and displaying a new response category/question in different display screens. Janssen describes displaying a previous question and a product result list as separate screens that are different screens than a screen displaying a new question, a new response options, and previous user answers. Gautestad describes displaying a table (286) including data from all item descriptions belonging to a particular category for the purpose of displaying an organized overview of existing data.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Claim 25 is submitted to be patentable over Rofrano in view of Sammon, and further in view of Janssen and Gautestad.

Claims 26, 29, and 42-45 depend directly from independent Claim 25. When the recitations of Claims 26, 29, and 42-45 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 25, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 26, 29, and 42-45 likewise are patentable over Rofrano in view of Sammon, and further in view of Janssen and Gautestad.

Moreover, Applicants respectfully submit that the Section 103 rejections of Claims 1, 4-14, 17-26, and 29-45 are not proper rejections. As is well established, obviousness cannot be established by combining the teachings of the cited art to produce the claimed invention, absent some teaching, suggestion, or incentive supporting the combination. None of the cited art, considered alone or in combination, describes or suggests the claimed combination. Further, in contrast to the Examiner's assertion within the Office Action, Applicants

respectfully submit that it would not be obvious to one skilled in the art to combine the cited art because there is no motivation to combine the references suggested in the cited art itself. Specifically, none of the applied references describes or suggests displaying the updated product matrix, the previous product configuration question, and a new product configuration question in a same display page, as required by Applicants' claimed invention.

As the Federal Circuit has recognized, obviousness is not established merely by combining references having different individual elements of pending claims. Ex parte Levengood, 28 U.S.P.Q.2d 1300 (Bd. Pat. App. & Inter. 1993). MPEP §2143.01. Rather, there must be some suggestion, outside of Applicants' disclosure, in the prior art to combine such references, and a reasonable expectation of success must be both found in the prior art, and not based on Applicants' disclosure. In re Vaeck, 20 U.S.P.Q.2d 1436 (Fed. Cir. 1991). In the present case, neither a suggestion nor motivation to combine the prior art disclosures, nor any reasonable expectation of success has been shown.

Further, it is impermissible to use the claimed invention as an instruction manual or "template" to piece together the teachings of the cited art so that the claimed invention is rendered obvious. Specifically, one cannot use hindsight reconstruction to pick and choose among isolated disclosures in the art to deprecate the claimed invention. Further, it is impermissible to pick and choose from any one reference only so much of it as will support a given position, to the exclusion of other parts necessary to the full appreciation of what such reference fairly suggests to one of ordinary skill in the art. The present Section 103 rejection is based on a combination of teachings selected from multiple patents in an attempt to arrive at the claimed invention. Because there is no teaching or suggestion in the cited art for the combination, the Section 103 rejection appears to be based on a hindsight reconstruction in which isolated disclosures have been picked and chosen in an attempt to deprecate the present invention. Of course, such a combination is impermissible, and for this reason alone, Applicants request that the Section 103 rejection of Claims 1, 4-9, 11-14, 17-26, and 29-45 be withdrawn.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the Section 103 rejection of Claims 1, 4-9, 11-14, 17-26, and 29-45 be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing remarks, this application is believed to be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and favorable action is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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